#### This was an unbroken counterplan we cut against militarism affs

### Video Games PIC

#### At the level of geopolitics, war games play a crucial role in the dissemination of militarism

Thomson 09 [Thomson, Matthew Ian Malcolm. Military computer games and the new American militarism: What computer games teach us about war. Diss. University of Nottingham, 2009. http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/10672/1/Matt\_Thomson\_PhD\_Thesis\_Pdf.pdf //BWSWJ]

In 2006, U.S. military interventions in Venezuela, Iran and North Korea threatened to trigger a global conflict. In Venezuela, the U.S. invasion was met by accusations of psychological terror; in North Korea, The Korea Times warned that the American attack would lead only to ‘miserable defeat and gruesome deaths;’1 and in Iran, an attack on Iranian nuclear facilities by American Special Forces was met not only by petition campaigns and official denunciations, but also Iranian infiltration into Iraq and attempts to disrupt world oil supplies by blowing up a U.S. tanker in the Strait of Hormuz. Of course, none of these events occurred in reality; they occurred only in the virtual reality of computer games. Yet such was the significance attached to these computer game representations that the events that they portrayed came to play a part at the level of genuine global geopolitics. In Venezuela, Ismael Garcia, a Venezuelan congressman and supporter of President Chavez, warned of an impending American invasion, claiming that ‘the U.S. government knows how to prepare campaigns of psychological terror so they can make things happen later’.2 He was responding to the representation of an American invasion in the computer game Mercenaries 2. 3 The Korea Times, in threatening ‘miserable defeat and gruesome deaths’, was responding to the depiction of an American attack on North Korea in the game Ghost Recon 2. 4 The attack on Iranian nuclear facilities carried out in the game KumaWar was met by petition campaigns and official denunciations in Iran, but also by a virtual military response in the game Rescue the Nuke Scientist, produced by the Union of Islamic Student Societies, in which Iranian forces infiltrated Iraq.5 The Iranian government, following Khameini’s threat that he would seek to disrupt oil exports if the U.S. did not back off Iran’s nuclear program, funded the production of Counter Strike, a game illustrating how to disrupt world oil supplies by blowing up a U.S. tanker in the strait of Hormuz.6 In the Middle East, there has been news of the Hezbollah produced Special Force, based on actual battles from 2000, and the Damascus based Afkar Media productions UnderAsh and UnderSiege, which depict the Israeli occupation and the intifadas.7 In the U.K, the intelligence agency G.C.H.Q. have begun to embed recruitment advertisements within games such as Tom Clancy’s Splinter Cell: Double Agent8 , and according to the U.S. Defense Department, al Qaeda has begun to use games as recruitment tools.9 The global use of computer games as tools of recruitment, propaganda, and political confrontation, and the reaction which these games have evoked, is testament to the belief in the power of games on the part of governments, intelligence agencies, militaries, and terrorist organizations. But nowhere has this potential been seized upon as greatly as in the U.S., where the U.S. military has adopted computer war games for the purposes of training, recruitment, testing and procurement. As Michael Macedonia, the U.S. Simulation, Training and Instrumentation Command (STRICOM) Chief Scientist and Technical Director has argued: ‘computer games are not nonsense. We win wars with these games’.10

#### Military themed games dissolve the boundary between civilian and the military – habituating consumers into militarism and violence

Martino 12 [Martino John (Victoria Institute); 2012; Video Games and the Militarisation of Society: Towards a Theoretical and Conceptual Framework. In: Hercheui M.D., Whitehouse D., McIver W., Phahlamohlaka J. (eds) ICT Critical Infrastructures and Society. HCC 2012. IFIP Advances in Information and Communication Technology, vol 386. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-642-33332-3\_24 //BWSWJ]

The process of militarisation reflects a weakening of the boundaries “between military and civilian institutions, activities and aims” [12]. Computer and video games with a military theme act in a manner which extends the process of boundary weakening [12] between military and civilian institutions and activities. Military themed computer and video games such as the first person “Military Shooter” (for example Doom or the Call of Duty: Modern Warfare game series) enhance the already potent cultural tools that modern political regimes have at their disposal for propaganda purposes through the mass mediums of print, television, film and radio. Video games and their online support communities and websites add another layer of political enculturation to the needs and interests of what Negri and Hardt have described as the “Empire” [8, 18]. In the twenty-first century militarisation as a socio-cultural force has at its disposal the product of over four decades of close alignment between the military and the media-entertainment industries – the video game. 4.1 Playable Media The importance of the military in American culture as portrayed in literature, films, television, comics, the press and news media for over a century has been pivotal in this process of boundary weakening. Recent developments in the media and entertainment field – advances in computer and video games, as well as the growth of new forms of the Internet and social media – have meant that the existing conduits for militarisation through traditional media and cultural channels have been amplified. The emergence of powerful new forms of media and the growing sophistication of playable media technologies such as computer and video games has added to the existing array of mechanisms that facilitate the process of militarisation. Social media and applications have been harnessed to promote United States (US) values and objectives through the shaping of public opinion [19]. 4.2 The “Military Shooter” Modern computer and video console games with a military theme or with military content use software that has its origins in, or is convertible to, a battle simulator. The inventor of an early arcade video game Battlezone describes the process of adapting his game to the requirements of the US military as follows: “… we were not modeling some fantasy tank, we were modeling an infantryfighting vehicle that had a turret that could rotate independently of the tank. It had a choice of guns to use. Instead of a gravity-free cannon, you had ballistics to configure. You had to have identifiable targets because they wanted to train gunners to recognise the difference between friendly and enemy vehicles” [20]. The use of games for training and simulation purposes has extended beyond the tank warfare simulation of Battlezone to the more complex infantry focused Military Shooter. A Military Shooter is a military themed variant of the First Person Shooter (FPS) style of computer gaming. A FPS game is “ played in the subjective, or first person, perspective and therefore…(is)…the visual progeny of subjective camera techniques in the cinema. But perhaps equally essential to the FPS genre is the players weapon, which generally appears in the right foreground of the frame” [21]. This genre of gaming gained a wide audience in the early 1990s with the release of the World War II based Wolfenstein (1992) and the science fiction inspired Doom (1993) [4]. FPS games such as these have as their defining characteristic a lone hero armed to the teeth and up against hordes of Nazis in Wolfenstein, or trans-dimensional demons in Doom. Doom underwent a military make-over in the 1990s when the US military modified it to become Marine Doom which has since been used as an official military training tool [22]. Military Shooters differ from these early games in that they are often realistic in their use of plot, location and weaponry. Military Shooters can also incorporate squad-based tactics as in Full Spectrum Warrior. What distinguishes the modern Military Shooter from early examples of the FPS genre is the attention to realism in the content, the authenticity of weapons, the realistic application of physics and the adherence to narrative and interactivity. The technology behind today’s Military Shooters enables program designers to reproduce realistic war settings complete with sights and sounds and the ability to interact with others in an accurate, though virtual war zone. Using today’s high capacity computing technology, gamers are able to immerse themselves within a synthetic war zone and use a range of accurate representations of weaponry in settings where the atmospherics of war, wind, light, and terrain etc., are as important within the game as they would be in the real world. This in many ways lifts the modern Military Shooter out of the world of gaming and into the world of simulation and training. The Military Shooter relies on technology that creates an authentic simulation within which the player is able to interact with autonomous and realistic synthetic agents (humans) within a dynamic narrative framework. The technology underpinning this capacity is the product of a close working relationship between technologists and the military and the goal of enhancing the training effectiveness of simulation technology [1], [23], [24]. One of the key institutions driving the design of the technologies at the core of the modern FPS is the Institute of Creative Technologies located at the University of California. The Institute was funded by the US Army as part of its program to apply new digital technologies to its array of training and simulation tools. The Institute combined the technology of the emergent gaming and simulation fields with the narrative skills of “Hollywood” to produce accurate and engaging simulation and gaming technologies [25]. According to the Institute of Creative Technologies web page, the organisation leads “an international effort to develop virtual humans who think and behave like real people. We create tools and immersive environments to experientially transport participants to other places.” [25]. The technology developed by the Institute of Creative Technologies has helped enhance the realism now possible within the Military Shooter genre of gaming. Technologies developed in places such as the Institute of Creative Technologies to help prepare soldiers for the complex task of navigating the modern battle space have been augmented by game designers into a fun activity – complete with “leader-boards” and “kill/death” ratio statistics. The impact of these games on young people is open to debate, and no clear evidence exists that playing these games turns someone into a killer or the perfect soldier. The issue requires a more nuanced approach than that often engaged in by the mass media, academic critics and supporters. Military themed or oriented games such as Call of Duty Modern Warfare 3 amplify the already powerful process of militarisation. Games desensitise the player to the use and consequences of violence. It is enough that the player becomes habituated to the idea that the use of violence should not be questioned and follows the model of classical conditioning. As the imagery of the television advertisement (Fig. 2) for Call of Duty Modern Warfare 3 attests anyone (the “Noob” or the novice player) can, through playing the game, bring out the soldier within. Further, the socio-cultural process of militarisation has been enhanced through the materialisation of technological capacity and the popularity of Military Shooter games and other forms of military themed gaming. This coalescence has meant that the increased availability of advanced consumer technology (hardware and software) has provided a mechanism through which the mental framework of young people – “the players” has been shaped by what has been referred to earlier as a military habitus – militarist language, values and practices. This is due in no small part to the level of engagement possible when playing these games. Their scenarios and supporting infrastructure (tally-boards, websites, online forums, and books etc.) enable players to envelope themselves within a world in which they are significant actors amongst a global community of like-minded individuals and “clans”.

#### Video games unquestionably sanitize the public to conflict and allow the US military to infect militarism in students’ minds

Thomson 09 [Thomson, Matthew Ian Malcolm. Military computer games and the new American militarism: What computer games teach us about war. Diss. University of Nottingham, 2009. http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/10672/1/Matt\_Thomson\_PhD\_Thesis\_Pdf.pdf //BWSWJ]

The U.S. military has now identified and publically stated the potential of computer games as recruitment tools and as tools of propaganda. In 2000, the U.S. Defense Science Board described computer games as ‘perhaps the most popular means’ of disseminating information in support of psychological op[s]erations.1 The U.S. Army spent over $7 million developing America’s Army in the belief that the medium offered the opportunity of reaching a previously untapped audience. As Major Chris Chambers, Deputy Director of the Army Games Project explained: ‘What this means is that we make connections with Americans who might not have had a connection with the Army. We use the videogame to make that connection’.2 As Colonel Wardynski, the director of the America’s Army project, explicitly explains in his article ‘Informing Popular Culture’ (2004), the purpose of the game is to frame ‘information about soldiering within the entertaining and immersive context of a game’,3 and to provide a means with which to disseminate information concerning the armed forces at a time when fewer and fewer people have direct experience of the military. In recognizing the power of computer games in shaping, informing and influencing people’s perceptions, the U.S. Army has attempted to garner this power as a means of providing information concerning military values and careers in the armed forces. The status of military computer games as propaganda is therefore not really open to debate; but it is the way in which the propagandist vision of these games - and the notion of propaganda itself - has been conceived and explained, that needs readdressing. Existing analyses of the propagandist significance of games have been based on two main supporting beliefs: firstly, the idea that military computer games recreate a vision of high-tech ‘joystick war’ which, in mirroring the military’s own technophiliac discourse of new warfare, sanitizes the realities of combat; and secondly, the fundamental understanding of propaganda as signifying sinister strategies of deception, distortion and manipulation. The purpose of this chapter is to challenge both of these understandings and to provide a reexamination of the content of games, as well as their propagandist potential.

#### War games can create an affective attachment to militarism and war – a analysis of militaristic video games by scholars is key

Gangon 10 [Frédérick Gagnon (Researcher in residence at the Raoul-Dandurand Chair since December 2001), “Invading Your Hearts and Minds”: Call of Duty and the (Re)Writing of Militarism in U.S. Digital Games and Popular Culture, European journal of American studie, Vol 5, No 3 | 2010, document 3, Online since 16 November 2010; http://ejas.revues.org/8831 ; DOI : 10.4000/ejas.8831 //BWSWJ]

The goal of this article was to show how a digital game such as Call of Duty can become “an artefact that legitimizes modern militaries as a natural part of social and personal life” (Flusty et al. 2008, 626). We have shown how MW and MW2 echoe and (re)write ideas reflecting the militarist ideology that has often been (pre)dominant in the post-9/11 U.S. national security debate. In particular, Call of Duty resonates with and reinforces a tabloid imaginary of post-9/11 geopolitics when it tells players that “we” are constantly on the brink of war with international actors such as Arab terrorists and Russia, who will not hesitate to invade “our” countries and attack “us” with nuclear weapons. In keeping with such a catastrophic and pessimistic vision of world politics, the idea that the U.S. and its allies have to maintain a strong military is constantly (re)inscribed in MW and MW2, the plots of which are based on an “all-pervasive rhetoric of warfare” (Leonard 2004, 6) that glorifies the U.S. war machine, downplays the monstrosities of war and encourage our myopia by depicting a sanitized vision of armed conflict. 29 Granted, it would be going too far to argue that those who play Call of Duty will automatically embrace militarism and the values embedded in the games. Though the 1999 Columbine High School massacre has led many academics, media, parents and government officials to argue that digital game use among children has “deleterious consequences, ranging from aggressiveness and violence” (Souri 2007, 542), video game experts such as Joe Bryce and Jason Rutter show that the research trying to prove that digital games are a catalyst for violence is “inconclusive and often contradictory” (Bryce and Rutter 2006, 218). Matthew Thomson agrees with Bryce and Rutter when he writes, “any suggestion that computer games influence public understandings of warfare must concede that the process of audience reception is far more complex than the passive acceptance of meaning that the ‘hypodermic needle’ model of media effects once suggested, and that the interaction between game and player involves processes of encoding and decoding, as well as resistance and rejection” (Thomson 2008, 20-21). 30 In her study of the meanings players create about their engagement with war digital games, Nina B. Huntemann gathered data in multiple focus group and participant observation sessions with a sample size of 26 male players ranging from 18 to 36 years of age and observed the following: “The players I interviewed retained their skepticism about current military actions, questioning the motives, strategies, purported goals, and likely success of U.S. foreign policy and military intervention” (Huntemann 2010, 232). Having discussed the potential effect of games on understandings and perceptions of warfare with dozens of MW and MW2 players, we also observed that there are probably as many players who are seduced by the vision of the military portrayed in Call of Duty as there are players who are repulsed by it. For instance, one player from the Middle East confided that he loves the game even though he rejects militarism, U.S. interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and state violence in general. Thus, as the literature on audience reception of digital games and interviews with players show, Call of Duty will not necessarily make you want to join the military or support the wars waged by you country. 31 That being said, we have showed in this article that MW and MW2 certainly has – at least – the potential to make you “love the bomb” and embrace militarism. This is why we think David Leonard is right to argue that educators, scholars and — most importantly — players must “think about ways to use video games as means to teach, destabilize, and elucidate the manner in which games employ and deploy racial, gendered, and national meaning, often reinforcing dominant ideas and the status quo” (Leonard 2004, 1). In other words, playing Call of Duty primarily because it is fun — and millions of players can confirm it is! — is probably not wrong in itself. But playing it for the sake of “making the familiar strange,” and “disrupting the taking for granted that blinkers our thinking and reading” (Costigliola 2004, 280) should be encouraged. Indeed, it can help us to critically analyse the moral implications of the (hyper)militarization of our everyday lives, denounce the trivialization of (state) violence, and raise the hard questions that might prompt our leaders to make the world safer for peace, international reciprocity, and social and international justice.

#### Thus the counterplan text: Public colleges and universities in the United States ought not restrict any constitutionally protected speech except for the sale and use of military-themed computer and video games

#### Video games, even violent ones, are protected – supreme court precedent

Gutterman 11 [Roy S. Gutterman, 6-28-2011, "Violent Video Games and the First Amendment," Huffington Post, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/roy-s-gutterman/violent-video-games-and-t_b_885874.html> //BWSWJ]

Play again, kids. Those video games, even the ones depicting extreme violence, are protected by the First Amendment, the Supreme Court ruled Monday, just like those old books and movies. In one of the most closely-watched and eagerly-anticipated cases of the term, the Supreme Court waited until the last day of the session to shoot down a California law banning the sale of violent video games to minors, and extend First Amendment rights to a new modern medium. As the law catches up with modern technology, in Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association, Justice Antonin Scalia pointed to other forms of speech and expression accessed by minors that historically enjoy protection under the First Amendment, despite sometimes graphic depictions of violence. Children’s literature such as Grimm’s Fairy Tales — which Scalia wrote are “grim indeed” — and some stories immortalized by Disney, including Snow White and Cinderella, have violent themes and depictions. Some classic staples of high school literature curricula such as The Odyssey of Homer, Dante’s Inferno and Golding’s Lord of the Flies, depict the same graphic violence California sought to ban and punish when it pops up in the form of video games. “Like the protected books, plays, and movies that preceded them, video games communicate ideas — and even social messages — through many familiar literary devices (such as characters, dialogue, plot, and music) and through features distinctive to the medium (such as the player’s interaction with the virtual world). That suffices to confer First Amendment protection,” Scalia wrote. The content-based restrictions posed by California’s law failed on strict scrutiny grounds because the state could not prove that there was a compelling government interest justifying the ban of the sale of violent video games to minors; that these games harm young minds; and that playing violent video games caused minors to engage in violent conduct. California’s law tried to equate violent video games to the concept of “variable obscenity,” which legally punishes sale or distribution of sexual content to minors. This “shoehorn” attempt to create a new category of illegal speech — violent video games in the hands of minors — was “unprecedented and mistaken,” Scalia wrote. Government must meet an extremely high burden under the First Amendment to create a category of speech that can be punished, regulated or censored, and prove a compelling governmental interest to justify the invasion of these rights. Over time, the Court has ruled obscenity, incitement and fighting words can be legally suppressed. But the government interest in suppressing those categories is closely linked to a precise, provable harm, which is also often tied to the time, place and manner of the speech. Last term, the Court refused to create a new category of punishable speech in United States v. Stevens, which rejected a law criminalizing the sale and distribution of videos depicting animal violence. Scalia applied Stevens as controlling precedent in refusing to equate violent video games with other forms of speech that can be censored. California’s law also singled out video game manufacturers who create violent content while failing to take into account that the minors could encounter the same potentially harmful content through cartoons, movies or other media. Conversely, the law could punish too much content protected under the First Amendment. At the oral arguments in November, Scalia aggressively questioned California’s lawyers about the law and its censoring effect. However, Scalia did not ignore governmental concerns or the concerns of parents to protect their children from potentially harmful content. “Even where the protection of children is the object, the constitutional limits on government action apply,” Scalia wrote. The video game industry, which challenged the law on First Amendment grounds, also maintains a voluntary ratings system for its games, which can assist parents. This system removes the government from the equation and lets the video game manufacturers create and gamers of all ages play without government oversight, and that is a win for the First Amendment.